



Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future

LÜ Xue-Du*

*National Climate Center, China Meteorological Administration, Beijing 100081, China
Asian Development Bank, Manila 1550, Philippines*

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Abstract

The Lima call for climate action adopted at the Lima Climate Conference on Climate Change specifies that the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, shall apply to the new climate agreement to be adopted at the Paris Conference on Climate Change in 2015. Decisions on other heavily debated items, including the intended nationally determined contributions, were also made at the Lima Conference. The significant achievements in Lima and the positive momentum have laid a solid foundation for the adoption of a new climate agreement in the Paris Climate Conference. Four measures are proposed for China to meet great challenges in addressing climate change beyond 2020, including early formulation and issuance of a climate change law, establishment of a greenhouse gas emission trading scheme, promotion of advanced climate technology investments, and further international engagement for climate change.

Keywords: Lima Climate Change Conference; Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action; Greenhouse gas mitigation; Climate change negotiation; Carbon market; Common but differentiated responsibilities

1. Conference overview

On December 1–12, 2014, COP20 (the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) and CMP10 (the 10th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hereinafter referred to as Lima Conference or the Conference), was held in Lima, Peru. Representatives from 188 countries, 102 international organizations, 624 non-

governmental organizations, and 434 media agencies took part in the conference. The conference was originally planned to close on December 12, but it was delayed until 1:30 PM on December 14 due to obvious disagreements on certain significant principles. The Lima call for climate action (LCCA) (UNFCCC, 2014) and other relevant decisions were finally adopted through compromises among Parties.

2. Major outcomes and analysis

Similar to the previous climate conferences, the Lima Conference had several dozen agenda items. The conference focused on the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), which has two key items (Lu, 2012): to further enhance all the Parties' pre-2020 action under the Convention or Kyoto Protocol and to prepare the draft negotiating text of a new agreement on post-2020 global climate change to be adopted in Paris, France in 2015. Other

* National Climate Center, China Meteorological Administration, Beijing 100081, China.

E-mail address: xlu@adb.org.

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important items included: loss and damage mechanism, financial mechanism, technology development and transfer, capacity-building, carbon market mechanism, and transparency of action and support. This report focusses on the analysis of the ADP negotiation outcomes, and briefly analyzes the outcomes of other aspects.

2.1. Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP)

At the COP17, the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC in 2011 in Durban, South Africa, a decision was adopted to launch a negotiation for formulating a new agreement on post-2020 global climate change and enhance all the Parties' pre-2020 emission mitigation efforts. This negotiation was launched at the end of May, 2012. At the COP18, the 18th Session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC, which took place at the end of 2012 in Doha, Qatar, an ADP negotiation roadmap was developed to work out the elements of the new agreement on global climate change in 2014, to prepare the draft negotiating text in May, 2015, and to conclude the negotiation by the end of 2015. It was agreed that the new agreement should include mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, etc. In addition, it was decided to continue the talks on pre-2020 measures and actions to mitigate the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. COP19, the 19th Session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC in 2013 in Warsaw, Poland, launched the discussion on the core elements of the new agreement. It was decided at the Warsaw Conference to request all Parties to submit their intended nationally determined contributions (hereinafter referred to as INDCs) in 2015, i.e., to put forward their post-2020 targets to address climate change based on their national circumstances and conditions as their contributions to protect the global climate.¹ In 2014, the ADP talk at the Lima Conference focused on three issues: the main elements of the new agreement on global climate change, the scope and timeframe of INDCs, and enhanced pre-2020 mitigation actions by all countries, especially the further quantified emission reduction commitments by developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol.

Prior to the Lima Conference, the ADP conducted three rounds of negotiations, in March, June, and October, 2014. Based on the inputs submitted by the Parties or Groups of Parties, the ADP Co-Chairs, with support of the Secretariat of the UNFCCC, put forward a Non Paper of new agreement elements that served as the basis for the negotiations at Lima. The main expected outcomes at the Lima Conference included: the formulation of a document covering the core elements of the 2015 agreement to serve as the basis for negotiations in 2015, definition of the INDCs scope, and further strengthening of the pre-2020 ambitions, including enhancing emission reduction commitments, meeting the financial commitments by developed

countries to support developing countries, and promoting the entry into force and implementation of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (to be effective after being approved or ratified by 144 Parties).

2.1.1. Talk on the new climate change agreement

The discussions at the Lima Conference were based on the Non Paper formulated in October, 2014. There were significant divergent and even opposing opinions among the Parties on the main principles and elements of the new agreement contained in the Non Paper. As a practice, the UNFCCC negotiation follows the Party-driven approach, which means that all inputs, proposals, and requirements by the Parties or Groups of Parties are included in the draft. Consequently, as the negotiations moved forward, the draft became increasingly lengthy (up to more than 100 pages at one time), with increasingly divergent or even opposing positions. If this had continued, it would have been impossible to formulate a draft to serve as the basis for the talks in 2015. In the last few days of the conference, all Parties agreed to focus the talk on the important principles, and define those principles in the COP decisions as a first step. Thereafter, based on the consensus on principles, negotiation on the substance would be conducted. In fact, the conference was delayed for 37.5 hours only because the Parties could not reach an agreement on the important principles. Finally, the Parties worked out the LCCA after reaching consensus on some of the important principles through compromise, while some principles were vaguely presented or not mentioned, remaining to be discussed in 2015.

The important principles discussed at the Lima Conference include the following.

First, should the principles under the UNFCCC be fully applicable in the proposed new agreement, especially the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the principle of equity between developing and developed countries? Developed countries emphasize that the principles under the UNFCCC are out of date, and that new principles should be developed to guide the new agreement to reflect the present global social and economic development; however, developing countries maintain that the principles under the UNFCCC are still valid and should apply to the proposed new agreements.

Second, should all Parties continue to be grouped into Annex I Parties and Non-Annex I Parties, the same grouping of Parties under UNFCCC? Developed countries oppose the continuing grouping of countries as that under the UNFCCC, arguing that the grouping is out of date since the world's political and economic situation has changed greatly, and that therefore, the countries should be re-grouped. However, developing countries insist that the grouping of countries as that under the UNFCCC should continue to apply, since this grouping was based on the historic GHG emissions and responsibilities for the protection of the climate, and the national development levels of countries. They maintain that although the economic and social status of many developing countries have significantly improved, the historic GHG emissions and the responsibilities of countries do not change, and that further, developed countries have developed even more during the same period.

¹ It should actually be all countries' specific commitments to address climate change, but at the final moment of the negotiation, it was changed into contributions as a compromise to reach agreement by all countries.

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